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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 001810

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DEPARTMENT FOR D, AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
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SUBJECT: DARFUR PEACE PROCESS: SIX RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
SUSTAINABLE TALKS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 01436

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 01785

[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 01776

[1](#)D. KHARTOUM 01798

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) The next critical milestone in the Darfur peace process is UN Special Envoy Jan Eliasson's briefing for the UN Security Council scheduled for November 27. While admitting that the rebel factions were unprepared to engage in negotiations in Sirte in late October, the UN and AU have set a tentative timeline to reconvene the Darfur peace talks by mid-January without articulating a clear strategy for bringing the movements to talks. The much-heralded UN/AU delegation to Darfur following the "de facto" recess of the Sirte talks did not result in any substantive tactical decisions, and in recent briefings for the international community, Eliasson and AU Special Envoy Salim Ahmed Salim continue to ask the international community to support its efforts to prepare the movements for negotiations without specifying a program--even to a key stakeholder like the USG--around which international efforts can coalesce.

[1](#)2. (C) Prior to the Sirte talks, Embassy Khartoum highlighted several hurdles to a successful UN/AU effort (Ref. A): disunity within the rebel factions, ongoing hostilities and tribal conflicts on the ground, the intransigence of rebel leader Abdulwahid al Nur, regional rivalries, and dysfunction within the UN/AU team. Each of these factors endures. In the next three weeks, the USG has a narrow opportunity to keep the Darfur peace process on track and increase the chance that UN/AU mediation will result in a sustainable political settlement by following the six recommendations in paras 3 through 8. End summary.

Preparing the Movements

[1](#)3. (C) With the exception of intransigent Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Abdulwahid al Nur, the rebel movements' unpreparedness to participate in negotiations is based on internal fissures not substantive policy differences. While they recognize that factionalism has weakened their position vis-a-vis the Sudanese Government, history has shown that the

movements are unable to overcome their internal disagreements on their own, necessitating outside mediation. The UN/AU continues to resist involvement in internal rebel dynamics, but reaching the mediators' stated end game of forging at most three to four rebel negotiating teams, each armed with specific platforms, cannot be reached without greater consolidation within the factions. In addition, fostering greater internal unity within a critical mass of the rebel movements and then bringing them into the peace process is more likely to put pressure on hold-outs like Abdulwahid than external, punitive measures.

--Recommended USG Action: Call for the UN/AU to set a date for an inclusive meeting of the rebel groups in a neutral venue to address their internal problems with hands-on UN/AU facilitation and mediation. While briefing the Khartoum diplomatic corps on November 15, Salim provided the first opening for such an effort when he said that the UN/AU needed to achieve "some degree of unity." (Ref. B) We should capitalize on his statement. (Note: This announcement will also provide momentum to the process, which currently has no announced agenda beyond the November 27 briefing at the UN Security Council. End note.)

Restructuring the UN/AU

¶4. (C) The Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST) that oversees the peace process suffers from the absence of high-level, day-to-day management to bring cohesion and focus. Eliasson and Salim's commitment fluctuates. UN Chief Mediator Taye Brook Zerihoun is also the deputy head of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and will step down from his Darfur role on January 1. AU Chief Mediator Sam Ibok is the AU's nominee

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for the director of political affairs for the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). JMST Director Jacques Christofedes finishes his tenure in late December. The JMST is overwhelmed with high-quality strategy documents which are not executed because of its internal dysfunction. The result is that sophisticated approaches for preparing the movements for negotiations, for involving tribal representatives and IDPs in the talks, for addressing the worsening intra-Arab and intra-African conflicts, for leveraging regional governments, and for communicating the UN/AU's messages are never implemented. This dysfunction also limits the international community's ability to support the process.

--Recommended USG Action: Call for the UN/AU to appoint a single, permanent UN/AU chief mediator and a permanent director of the JMST (reporting to the chief mediator) within the next four weeks. The terms of reference for both senior positions should state that they are resident in Khartoum, hold six-month contracts, and oversee both UN and AU efforts and personnel (under the leadership of the Special Envoys). They may require additional funding, and the JMST should be established as an independent political mission under the UN Department of Political Affairs rather than as part of UNAMID to maintain its impartiality. (Note: Our contacts within the UN in Khartoum inform us that there is support for this approach, but it needs a push in this direction.)

Winding Down the SPLM Initiative

¶5. (C) The SPLM initiative to work with several of the Darfur movements in Juba has been a useful step in uniting some of the smaller factions (Ref. C.). The SPLM's next steps, however, are unclear--as is how the SPLM effort intersects with UN/AU outreach to movements with more political and military weight that remain in Darfur. Representatives of the Justice and Equality Movement/Collective Leadership (JEM/CL) and SLA/Unity now in Juba want to return to Darfur

to pursue preparatory efforts with the leadership of their forces but are torn by the vaguely defined--yet ongoing--SPLM meetings in Juba.

--Recommended USG Action: We should thank the SPLM for their efforts, which have supported the UN/AU process, and suggest that the SPLM encourage the rebels still present in Juba to return to their bases and/or reach out to other groups in preparation for attendance at an inclusive, UN/AU-managed meeting of the movements as noted in para. 3. (Comment: This has the added corollary benefit of removing a distraction from the SPLM while they attempt to resolve their political crisis with the NCP and get the CPA back on track, rather than using the Darfur groups as leverage against Khartoum, either implicitly or directly.)

Bringing in SLM/Minawi

¶6. (C) The SLM/Minawi remains committed to playing a constructive role in the peace process but insists that it participate only as a signatory to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) rather than as a member of the Government of National Unity (GNU) delegation (Ref. D). Minawi could not maintain any credibility among his supporters if he subordinated his movements' interests to the National Congress Party (NCP) and Presidential Assistant Nafie Ali Nafie, the GNU's chief negotiator. For the last six weeks, senior NCP officials, including Nafie and Director General of the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Salah Ghosh, have rebuffed Minawi's requests to discuss a formula for the SLM's participation. The UN/AU's legal analysis has determined that SLM/Minawi can participate as a signatory because the DPA is not integrated into the national legal framework. In addition, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the SLM both stand to benefit through closer coordination as partners in the GNU. The SPLM has failed to engage effectively with the SLM, and the SLM is now resistant to SPLM overtures because of a lack of trust.

--Recommended USG Action 1: Assist the SLM/Minawi in drafting a legally sound and public document outlining its position on participation in the Darfur peace process and underscoring that it: 1) supports the UN/AU lead and wants to play a positive and constructive role and 2) is permitted--on legal

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grounds--to participate as a signatory to the DPA.

--Recommended USG Action 2: Facilitate coordination between the SLM and the SPLM and develop a transparent confidence-building program to bring the parties toward better cooperation--while avoiding the perception that the U.S. is attempting to overthrow the NCP.

Leveraging the Regional Governments

¶7. (C) Complex regional rivalries leave the rebel movements overwhelmed by a cacophony of competing messages and are one of the primary underlying causes for the splintering of the movements. The absence of a comprehensive UN/AU framework for engaging with regional governments has made it difficult to channel Libya, Eritrea, Chad, and Egypt's interests into a constructive process.

--Recommended USG Action: Develop a diplomatic strategy of incentives to employ with Libya and Chad once UN/AU plans for the next stages in the process solidify (per paras. 3 and 4). Working closely with France, such a strategy could give tangible weight to UN/AU actions and reinforce their attempts to foster a degree of unity within the movements.

Balancing Sanctions

18. (C) Past sanctions against rebel leaders, including those with strong ties to the West, have done little to change their behavior. In addition, UN, AU, or U.S. action against rebel leaders could backfire and jeopardize life-saving humanitarian operations in Darfur. Forging greater unity among the rebel factions and advancing a sophisticated strategy for including tribal leaders and IDPs in the negotiations are more likely to put pressure on hold-outs like JEM's Khalil Ibrahim and Abdulwahid. However, it is worth recognizing that the threat of sanctions could send a useful political message.

--Recommended USG action: Draft a carefully-worded U.S. position on sanctions against rebel leaders that balances the potentially positive impact of the threat with the possible consequences to humanitarian operations and does not tie the USG to commitments that it is unlikely to fulfill.

FERNANDEZ